

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

June 2020

Dear Convent

Thank you for your email about the transition period.

The UK left the EU on 31 January. A transition period has followed during which market access remains the same and the UK and EU are negotiating an agreement on their future relationship. The manifesto I stood on was clear that the transition period would not be extended beyond December 2020 and this has been put into law.

The outbreak of COVID-19 is serious and the Government's ministers are doing everything they can to tackle the virus based on the latest scientific and medical advice. However, work on negotiating our exit from the EU continues. The latest round of negotiations took place via videoconference in the week beginning 11 May and a further round is taking place this week.

I appreciate that you have concerns about the deadline but ministers have already shown that they are able to negotiate international agreements with speed and efficiency. The Withdrawal Agreement was re-opened and re-negotiated in under three months despite many believing that this would be not be possible. A high-level summit will take place this month where both sides intend to take stock of progress.

An extension would not be in the best interests of this country. First, it would blight new trade negotiations and prevent deals already under negotiation coming into force. Secondly, negotiations for the EU's new multiannual financial settlement start in 2021. It is expected to include a vast fiscal stimulus package and accompanying legislative programmes to shore up an already ailing eurozone. Having left the EU, we would be likely to find ourselves burdened with massive financial liabilities and bound by laws over which we have no say in shaping. Such laws are hardly likely to be framed to serve our interests.

The view of the Government is that there is ample time to strike a deal based on fair trade and friendly co-operation. The Government has made clear that we are looking for an agreement largely like those that the EU has agreed with others.

Member of Parliament for Darlington

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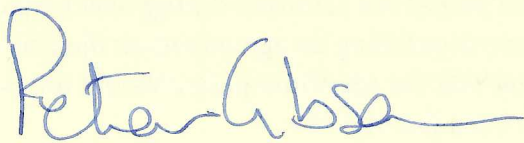
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The UK and the EU share closely aligned interests and I am confident that the determination and willingness of the Parties to reach a free trade agreement will ensure that the matter is brought to a conclusion by the end of 2020 as legally committed to in good faith by both parties as part of the transition period.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Gibson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

PETER GIBSON MP